

SOLICITATION NUMBER:	SOL-306-16-000006-OED
ISSUING DATE:	November 05, 2015
CLOSING DATE:	November 19, 2015
POSITION TITLE:	Education Program Specialist
NUMBER OF POSITIONS:	Single
MARKET VALUE:	GS-13 (\$73,115 - \$95,048) In addition, this post has 35% post differential and 35% danger pay
ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION OF POSITION:	USAID/Afghanistan
DIRECT SUPERVISOR:	USAID/Afghanistan, Education Team Leader
SUPERVISORY CONTROL:	Minimal. The incumbent is expected to act independently with little direction.
PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:	13 months with an option for renewal
SECURITY ACCESS:	Employment Authorization for Third Country National
AREA OF CONSIDERATION:	Third Country National Personal Service Contractor (TCNPSC) “Third Country National means an individual:- (i) Who is neither a citizen nor a permanent legal resident alien of the United States nor of the country to which assigned for duty (Afghanistan), and (ii) Who is eligible for return to his/her home country or country of recruitment at U.S. Government expense

Background:

With strong international assistance from the U.S. and other partners, Afghanistan is dramatically rebuilding the education sector after devastation from decades of war and conflict. Access to basic education has vastly improved since 2002. In that time, over 4,000 new schools were built, and enrollment has increased from 900,000 boys in 2002 to over 8 million students today, 39% of who are girls. The number of public school teachers in Afghanistan has dramatically increased – from 20,000 male teachers in 2001 to over 180,000 today (31% female). Beginning in the early 1990's, the higher education system deteriorated significantly. Enrollment dropped from 24,000 in 1990, to 11,000 in 1995, and finally to less than 8,000 in 2001. Despite achievements made since 2002, including faculty strengthening and increased enrollments, the quality of higher education available today in the country is generally poor, with both insufficient capacity and unproven quality.

Basic Education

While considerable progress has been made, public demand for education is increasing more quickly than the current system can absorb. Access to education remains a significant barrier to economic growth in the country. The Ministry of Education (MoE) reports in its National Education Strategic Plan II 2010-2014 (NESP-II) that 42% of the total population of school age children in Afghanistan are not enrolled in school, and almost one million of those enrolled are considered permanently absent from the classroom. Of those that are out-of-school, the vast majority are female. In addition to security and cultural constraints, a shortage of female teachers and the deployment of qualified female teachers to urban areas are major obstacles to increasing girls' enrollment in school.

In addition to issues of access, the quality of education provided in Afghanistan is low. A major problem identified by the MoE is the inadequate number of qualified teachers available to teach in public schools. Despite an increase in the overall number of teachers, 58% do not meet minimum qualifications, some of whom did not graduate from 10th grade. There are over 18,000 school principals or district administrators in the system, many of whom are considered ineffective because they lack supervisory skills and are not well-versed in national policy. Other issues include insufficient supplies of learning materials, such as textbooks, and limited access to schooling in rural areas.

Low literacy rates and limited skills of youth are also major issues in Afghanistan. The national literacy rate stands at 31% although the youth literacy rate is 47%, indicating a positive trend. In rural areas, an average of 10% of women and 37% of men are literate. One of the main objectives identified in the NESP-II, is to increase the national literacy rate. In addition, 68% of the population is under the age of 25. For these youth, access to quality basic education is limited and access to post-secondary educational opportunities is even more limited.

To help confront these issues, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has made major investments in basic education, particularly in the areas of teacher professional development, community-based education, and technical-vocational education and training (TVET). From 2006-2011, USAID support has resulted in training more than 75,000 teachers, 31% of whom were female; providing access to schooling through community-based education programs for approximately 105,000 students in remote rural locations; constructing or renovating more than 560 school buildings, and printing 148 million primary school textbooks. In addition, USAID has strengthened capacity of the MoE, which has taken a leadership role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan's education sector.

Higher Education

The quality of the Afghan tertiary education system is sub-standard as indicated by outdated curricula, insufficient laboratory equipment, and a shortage of qualified faculty. Only 35% of professors hold graduate degrees (30% master's and 5% doctorates); and many of the bachelor degree holders have little work or teaching experience. A nascent quality assurance or accreditation system is in place to define standards of learning (and teaching) and stipulate enforcement mechanisms. The limited and stagnant allocations to higher education are unlikely to change significantly in the near term although private colleges and universities are thriving. Thus, any major investment in improving the structure, faculty and processes of higher education would necessarily require a role for private businesses or external partners willing and able to continue involvement after USAID's investment is complete.

Since 2006, USAID has supported the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to improve universities and the overall higher education system. USAID support included: technical assistance to the MoHE to design, launch, and begin implementation of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP); support for a Quality Assurance and Accreditation program; and establishment of three academic committees to support implementation of the NHESP.

Basic Functions of the Position:

The Education Program Specialist will manage, monitor, and evaluate basic and/or higher education activities; significantly contribute to coordination and engagement in project activities and reporting requirements of the Office of Education Development (OED); mentor Afghan Foreign Service National (FSN) staff; and perform other duties, as assigned. S/he will serve as Agreement/Contracting Officer's Representative (A/COR) and/or Activity Manager of selected USAID-funded education projects implemented by contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities. S/he will also provide guidance and support to select Afghan FSN staff to maximize their contribution to the achievement of OED's objectives. USAID-funded programs emphasize the building of capacity of the Afghan government and its people, including Afghan FSN staff employed by USAID.

Duties and Responsibilities:

The Education Program Specialist's major duties and responsibilities include:

Basic Education Activities Oversight

- Serves as Agreement/Contracting Officer's Representative (A/COR) and/or Activity Manager of selected USAID-funded education projects implemented by contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities.
- Serves as OED focal point for a particular technical area in education, specifically early grade reading and math, learning assessments, school management, and capacity building; cross-cutting education topics; i.e., gender, youth, etc.; and/or serve a coordination function.
- Collects and reviews quarterly and annual program and financial reports and other required deliverables from contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities. Tracks progress and provides technical feedback and direction to ensure consistency with USAID regulations; ensures projects are on track and deliverables are acceptable; and promotes activity effectiveness and sustainability.
- Exercises independent judgment in areas such as project management, though not a policy-maker.

Work involves formulating projects, assessing program effectiveness, and investigating and analyzing a variety of unusual conditions, problems or questions.

- Reviews financial reports from contractor and grantee implementing partners with special attention to financial indicators (expenditures, pipelines, and congruity of expenditures against activities).
- Maintains databases related to the collection of information on project progress, objectives achieved and funds obligated, accrued, and disbursed.
- Responds to requests from the USAID/Washington, Congress, U.S. Embassy, (Ministry of Education (MoE), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other entities working in the sector and drafts official correspondence.
- Drafts official USAID documentation such as Congressional presentations and briefing papers, annual reports, action/decision Memos, Project Appraisal Documents, Implementation Letters, and procurement documents in consultation with the Supervisory Education Officer and Office Director.

Coordination and Engagement

- Liaises with the Ministry of Education, USAID/Washington, the interagency (military, State Department, etc.), multinationals agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, etc.), other education donors and stakeholders, and USAID/Afghanistan offices to ensure projects are on track and in alignment with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, National Higher Education Strategic Plan, National Education Strategic Plan, USAID Education Strategy, and other U.S. and Afghanistan policies and strategies. The incumbent performs under administrative direction, with latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility requiring extended professional training and experience which will demonstrate leadership and marked attainments.
- Maintains contact with individuals or groups from inside and outside of USAID to influence/motivate people or groups. S/he must be skillful in determining the appropriate approach in negotiating and persuading others.
- Collaborates with key donors and other stakeholders working in the area of basic, higher or non-formal education.
- Builds and maintains professional relationships with Mission employees, USAID/Washington staff, consultants, implementing partners, government officials, donor agencies, and other education sector entities
- Exercises extensive, consistent and superior judgment in managing the implementation of all aspects of his/her responsibilities, works with minimal supervision and wide latitude in planning and executing assignments with regard to the education sector.
- Works closely with Mission offices, donor organizations, and NGO implementing partners, and mid-to high-level Government of Afghanistan's officials. The incumbent will be expected to use all USAID policy and procedure available at the Mission and carry out USAID A/COR responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Conducts monitoring and evaluation activities and ensures projects are being successfully implemented through five-tiers of verification: USAID or U.S. Government (USG) sources, implementing partner, Government of Afghanistan, civil society, and 3rd party independent monitors.
- Participates in activity assessments and evaluations and develops program recommendations based on USAID comparative advantage; security permitting, conducts visits to project sites and reports successes as well as inconsistencies/problems; contributes to the data collection and synthesis

necessary for the preparation and revision of Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), annual report, the Operational Plan and other required documents.

- Collects and reviews quarterly and annual program reports from contractor/grantee implementing partners, or host-country government, provides feedback on reports, and works with partner to resolve challenges and implementation issues.

Reporting and Conducting Presentations

- The incumbent writes reports or significant sections of reports as required of OED.
- Collects and synthesizes information and data from various sources to be included in reports such as Program Performance Reports (PPR), Operational Plans (OP), quarterly and annual reports, audit reporting, quarterly data calls from the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), briefing documents, cables, and ad hoc reporting requests for various audiences including USAID/Washington, Congress, and the U.S. Embassy.
- Conducts presentations on the education sector, program, projects, topics and issues to various USG, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), and other audiences, as needed.

Mentoring and Capacity Building

- Provides mentoring and capacity building support to Afghan FSN staff in various technical areas of education and in effective USAID project management, as needed. Responsible for providing day-to-day technical and procedural guidance to select FSN staff who are charged with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of education activities.
- In coordination with the Mission Gender Advisor and OED FSN staff serving on the Mission Gender Team, analyzes on going and planned activities to ensure that USAID funded work addresses the needs and opportunities for the education of girls and women.

EVALUATION CRITERIA/SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applicants will be evaluated and ranked based on the following selection criteria:

- Education:** A Bachelor's degree in any of the social sciences stream to include but not limited to international development, basic education, education development, or a particular area of education, such as teacher education, curriculum development, early grade reading and math, learning assessments, community-based or non-formal education is required. A focus on comparative and international education is a strong plus.
- Work Experience:** Minimum six years of progressively responsible experience in program/project management with a proven track record of programmatic accomplishment which includes program and/or activity management, planning and analytical skills. Experience managing programs/projects in basic education, early grade reading and math, girls' education, learning assessments, or community-based/non-formal education is required.
- Communications:** Level IV (Fluent) speaking/reading English language communication skills required. Proven ability to communicate effectively in writing.
- Knowledge:** Knowledge of procedures and systems for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and activity design and management is required. Demonstrated ability to interact effectively with a broad range of stakeholders, such as host country government officials, non-governmental organizations, US and local staff. Knowledge of the political and social context of

Afghanistan and its educational system is highly desirable. Knowledge of the principles of acquisition of early grade reading and math skills is preferred.

- e. **Skills and Abilities:** Demonstrated activity and people management skills are essential. Strong communication and interpersonal skills in cross-cultural settings are required. Ability to interact effectively with a broad range of USAID and USG officials, other donors, implementing partners, clients, international organizations, host country government officials and NGO counterparts is highly desirable.

Applicants should carefully review the required experience and education requirements stated in this solicitation to ensure they meet the full set of criteria before submitting an application for consideration.

Applicants meeting the above required qualifications for the position will be evaluated based on information presented in the application and reference checks. USAID reserves the right to conduct interviews with the top ranked short-listed applicants. The interview will be one of the determining factors in the final selection.

A. TERM OF PERFORMANCE:

The term of the contract will be for thirteen months. Within four weeks after written notice from the Contracting Officer that all clearances have been received or, unless another date is specified by the Contracting Officer in writing, the incumbent shall proceed to Kabul to perform the above services which may be extended upon mutual agreement and subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds. This position has been classified at a U.S. Government GS-13. The actual salary of the successful candidate will be negotiated depending on qualifications and previous salary history.

In addition, the Mission has a 35% Post Differential allowance and 35% Danger Pay. During this period the selected candidate will be entitled to Rest and Recuperation trips in accordance with the Mission policy.

This position entitles 20 days Administrative Leave plus two days of travel time for each break. In excess of the Administrative Leave, Annual Leave or Compensatory time for the breaks can be used.

Physical Demands and Work Environment: Work in the office is mostly sedentary, depending on workload the incumbent may be requested to serve extended work hours and workdays. The travel to program-activity implementation sites outside of Kabul requires U.S. Government Regional Security Officer (RSO) approval, travel in fully armored vehicles and close coordination with the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate security officers, Department of Defense, and International Security Assistance Force as relevant.

B. GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN AFGHANISTAN:

Life in Kabul has somewhat improved since the establishment of the government, and great strides have been made to regularize the availability of services, utilities, and supplies of common consumer

items. Living conditions, however, are still difficult but this is a historical opportunity to work closely with a dedicated team to assist the Afghans to bring about peace and stability to their war-torn country. Afghanistan is an unaccompanied post. All staff will be housed on the heavily guarded and fortified Embassy compound.

C. MEDICAL AND SECURITY CLEARANCE:

The selected applicants must be able to obtain and maintain security and medical clearances. Third Country Nationals should be able to obtain employment authorization from the Regional Security Office. For medical clearances, Third Country Nationals should obtain Department of State Class I Medical Clearance.

D. BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES:

As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, a PSC is normally authorized to the benefits and allowances listed in this section. [NOTE: A contractor meeting the definition of a Third Country National shall be eligible for any of the listed fringe benefits to include health and life insurances, differentials and allowances.]

1. BENEFITS:

- 1) Contribution toward Health & life insurance
- 2) Pay Comparability Adjustment
- 3) Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
- 4) Annual & Sick Leave
- 5) Access to Embassy medical facilities, commissary and pouch mail service as per post policy

2. ALLOWANCES (If Applicable)*:

- 1) Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)
- 2) Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)
- 3) Post Allowance (Section 220)
- 4) Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)
- 5) Post Differential (Chapter 500)
- 6) Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600) and
- 7) Danger Pay (Section 650)
- 8) Education Allowance (Section 270)
- 9) Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)
- 10) Education Travel (Section 280)

* Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas).

E. CONTRACT INFORMATION BULLETINS (CIBs) or ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVES (AAPDs) PERTAINING TO PSCs:

AAPDs and CIBs contain changes to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulations and contract. Those documents can be found at this website:

http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/cib/subject.html#psc

AAPDs and CIBs contain changes to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulations and contract.

AAPD 06-11	Home Leave and Revised General Provision 5, Leave and Holidays
AAPD 06-10	PSC Medical expense payment responsibility
AAPD 06-07	AIDAR, Appendix D: Contract budget, salary determination and salary increase
AAPD 05-02	Clarification of Policy for Personal Services Contracts with Anticipated Contract Performance Periods Exceeding Five (5) Years
AAPD 06-01	Medical evacuation insurance
CIB 01-07	Clarification of the extension/renewal policy regarding PSCs
CIB 01-05	Clarification of the Rest and Recuperation (R&R) Policy Regarding Third Country Nationals
CIB 99-22	PSC Policy
CIB 98-23	Guidance regarding Classified Contract Security and Contractor Personnel Security Requirements
CIB 98-11	Determining a Market Value for Personal Services Contractors Hired under Appendix D.
CIB 97-16	Class Justification for use of Other Than Full and Open Competition for Personal Services Contracts with U.S. Citizens Contracted with Locally, with CCNs and TCNs Subject to the Local Compensation Plan, and for Overseas Contracts of \$250,000 or less
CIB 96-23	Unauthorized Provision in Personal Services Contracts
CIB 94-09	Sunday Pay for U.S. Personal Services Contractors (PSCs)
CIB 89-29	Use of Government Bill of Lading for Transportation of Personal Service Contractor (PSC) Household Effects, Unaccompanied Baggage and Privately Owned Vehicles

Various Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs) and Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directives (AAPDs) pertain to Personal Services Contracts can be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs>
 Additionally, AIDAR Appendixes D or J also applies to PSCs can be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/aidar.pdf>

F. REQUIRED FORM AND DOCUMENTS FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION:

Interested applicants must submit the following documents or their applications may not be considered for this position:

1. U.S. government AID 302-3 form which is available at the following website: www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/a302-3.doc;
2. A current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume;
3. A minimum of three (3) professional references, who are not family members or relatives, with working telephone and email contacts. The applicant's references must be able to provide substantive information about his/her past performance and abilities. At least one reference provided should be a current or former supervisor;
4. A written statement that addresses the Evaluation/Selection Criteria in this solicitation, and how the applicant believes their experience and skills meet or exceed these criteria.

The CV/resume must contain sufficient relevant information to evaluate the application in accordance with the stated evaluation criteria. Broad general statements that are vague or lacking specificity will

not be considered as effectively addressing particular selection criteria.

G. APPLYING

All applications must be submitted electronically by e-mail with the subject line **Education Program Specialist SOL- 306-16-000006/OED** to: AfghanPSCjobs@state.gov .

Attention: USAID/Afghanistan
Human Resources Office

Applicants may submit an application against this solicitation at any time but prior the closing date mentioned above unless revised. The highest ranking applications may be selected for an interview. **Only short listed candidates will be contacted.**

Point of Contact:

Any questions about this solicitation may be directed to: KabulAIDHR@usaid.gov.

Note: No in-person appointments or telephone calls will be entertained, unless you are required to have more information about this solicitation.

Place of Performance:

USAID/Afghanistan
U.S. Embassy
Great Massoud Road
Kabul, Afghanistan